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# AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted: A Qualitative Study Exploring Non-Cognitive Factors & Barriers for Retaining First Generation African American Males Attending HBCUs

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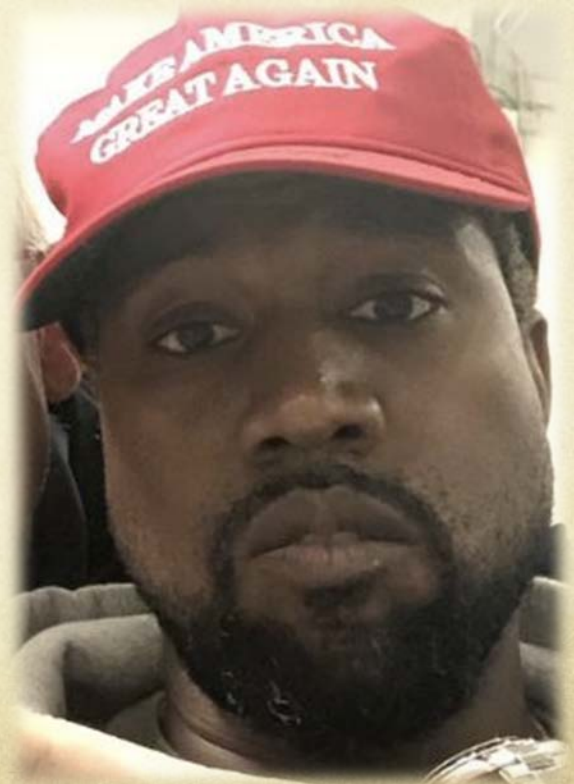
Title: AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted: A Qualitative Study Exploring Non-Cognitive Factors &  
Barriers for Retaining First Generation African American Males attending HBCUs  
**An Examination of Academic, Backgrounds, Social Behaviors, and Environmental Variables:**

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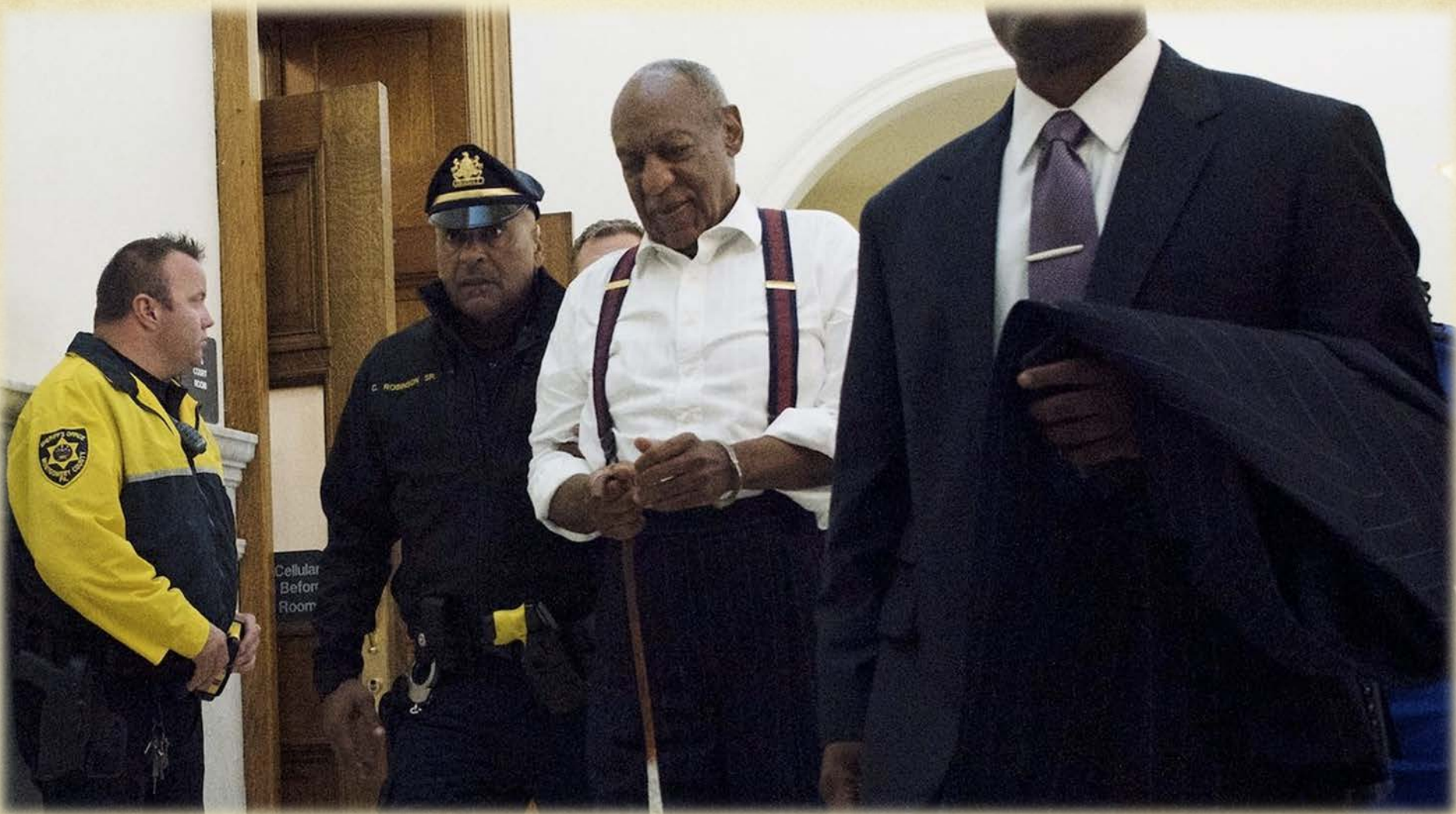
# Understanding Defeatism

**Defeatism:** is a way of thinking or talking which suggests that you expect to be unsuccessful.

**Pessimism:** a tendency to see the worst aspect of things or believe that the worst will happen; a lack of hope or confidence in the future.



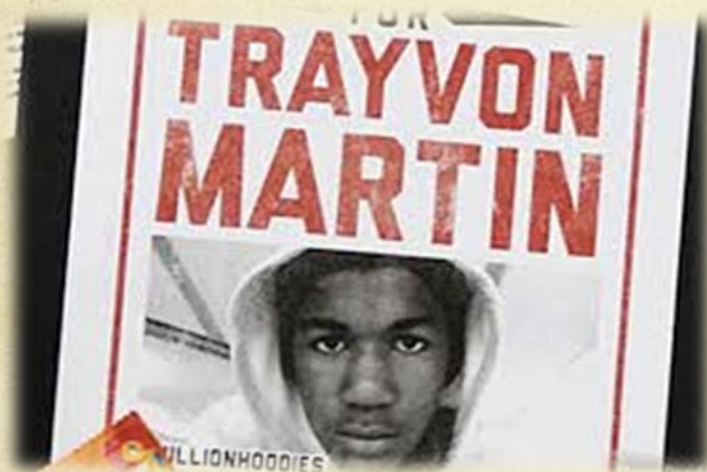












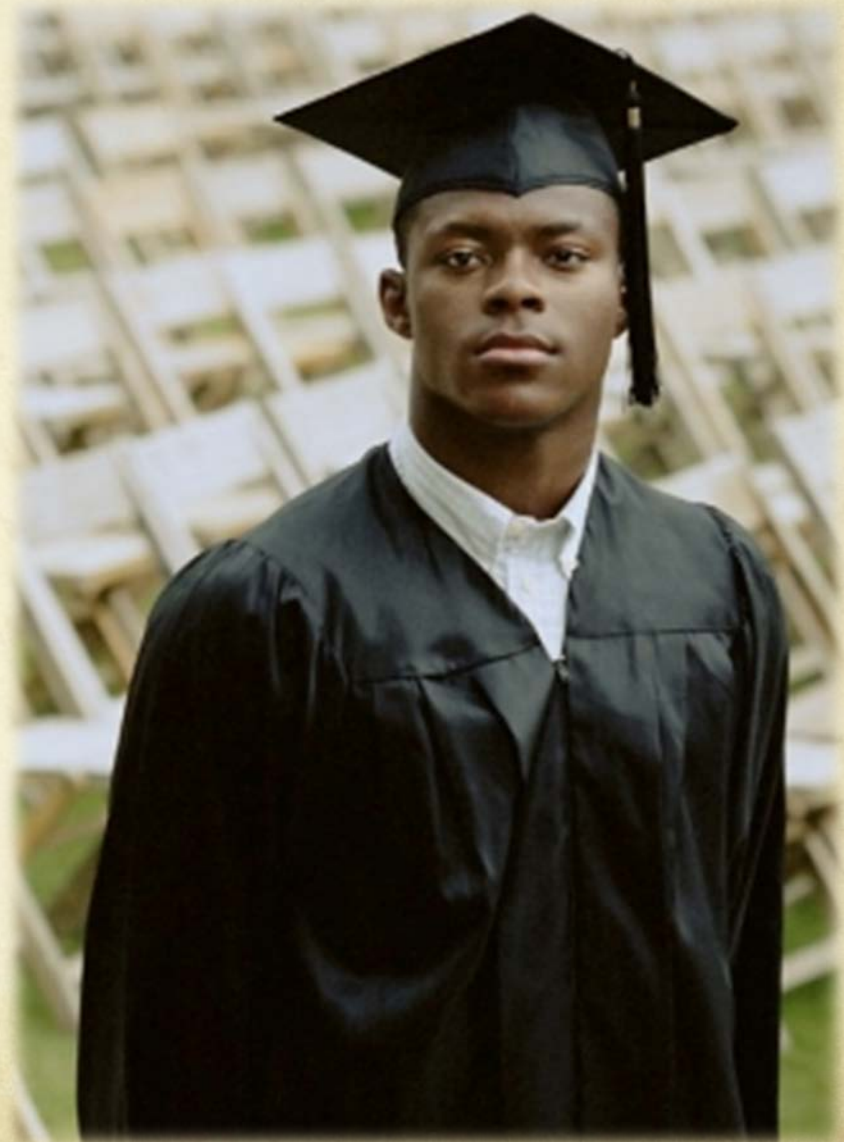


# Abstract

Research has shown that Black men are attending college at significantly disproportionate rates than their white male counterparts.

According to a report by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES; 2010), the gender gap for enrollment between male and female Black students has increased significantly over the last 30 years.

**Keywords:** Retention, First Generation, Student Services, Student Engagement, HBCU and Male Student Success





# Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the phenomena of college persistence and non-cognitive issues for first-generation

African-American males attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) in the southeastern portion of the United States.





# Understanding The Research

**Tinto (1993)** asserts more than 75 percent of students withdraw due to the challenges related to a lack of fit between their skills and interests, and the structures, resources, and patterns of an educational institution.

**Persistence:** To continue college enrollment without interruption through graduation (NCES, 2011).

**Retention Barriers:** Barriers that directly or indirectly impact student persistence in postsecondary education.

**Retention Rate:** Percentage of first-time students who return to the same institution to continue their studies the following fall semester (NCES, 2011).

**Retention Strategies:** Strategies implemented by postsecondary educational institutions in an effort to positive influence student persistence.

# Research Purpose

The purpose of this study is to collect, analyze, and report African American male students' perceptions of factors that contribute to their academic success.

- *This study will examine how FGAAM students at HBCU's handle non-cognitive issues as they occur.*
- Examine student support services at HBCUs compared to services provided to black males attending Predominantly White Institutions.
- *Review the data already collected on the progression of African American males*





# State of the Problem

This qualitative research is to explore non-cognitive factors that influence or affect retention rates for First Generation African American male students attending Historically Black Colleges and Universities. The academic success and retention of students, particularly during their first year, are major concerns for colleges and universities (Noble and Sawyer, 1987; Ting, 2001; Sander, Pike and Saupe, 2002).



# Proposed QE Part 1 Research Questions

**RQ1.** What non-cognitive variables contribute to first-generation male students of color persistence to baccalaureate degree completion?

**RQ2.** What motivating factors influence male students of color to persist towards completion of their baccalaureate degree?

**RQ3.** What personal experiences on campus impacted or influenced their decision to stay or withdraw from pursuit of earning their degree?

**RQ4.** What roles did peers, parents and collegiate educators play in their ability to academically succeed at HBCUs?





# Research Approach

## + Qualitative Research Methods:

- + **Participant observation:**
  - Observational field work done in the actual context being studied;
  - + Focus on how individuals interrelate in their own environment (and the influence of this environment):
  - + Double Entry Field Notes- Observations and Thoughts
- + **Interviews:**
  - + Open Ended Questions,
  - + Structured
  - + Semi-structured
- + **Focus Groups:**
  - + Open Ended Questions,
  - + Structured
  - + Semi-structured
- + **Surveys:**
  - + Open Ended,
  - + Closed,
  - + Multiple Choice
  - + Likert Scale
- + **Historical Archives**

*Postpositivists* hold a deterministic philosophy in which causes (probably) determine effects or outcomes.

# Phenomenology & Narrative Inquiry

## What is phenomenology?

- Phenomenology examines patterns of subjective experience and consciousness
- Focus upon a systematic reflection on and investigation of the structures of consciousness: *Realist concepts can be examined scientifically*
- Based solely on consciousness
- Individuals will be influenced by others, but not same experience
- Views social world as multiform structure
  - Inner-subjectivity
  - Group understanding/unity



“Narrative Inquiry is a Qualitative research method. Narrative inquiry is a mean by which we systematically gather, analyze and represent people’s stories as told by them, which challenges traditional and modernist view of truth, reality, knowledge and personhood. Rather than what happened in the event ,the focus on the significance of that event. ”





# Participant's

This primary research study will consist of 10-12 first-generation African American males who entered a public HBCU as a first-generation student.





# Participate Description

## Criteria

- ❖ African-American Male
- ❖ Undergraduate
- ❖ First-Generation
- ❖ Minimum Enrollment of One Semester
- ❖ HBCU Enrollment
- ❖ First-time Student
- ❖ Age 18-Up







# Proposed Sampling Techniques

Through *observation & Narrative Inquiry* I will observe and record the phenomena occurring during the lived experiences of first-generation African American males attending HBCUs.

# Limitation of Study

*The first generation population is growing at enormous rates for African American women, but not so much for males.*

**Due to the design, the results for all students participating in the study may not be completely honest when answering the questions.**

Additionally, some participants may not be comfortable answering all of the questions honestly. Or they may respond with what they assume to be the correct answer and not what one actually experiences.



# Review of literature

This review of the literature will included research-based articles, dissertations, journal articles, and books. From this literature the multiple categories of variables related to academic achievement will be discussed.

The categories examined will be, personal (cognitive and non-cognitive) variables, demographic variables, and institutional variables.



# Research Related to Non-cognitive Retention Variables

## *Specific Factors Affecting Black Male Retention*

**Factor Background:** Parental Support, Parents' Education, College Preparatory Curriculum and Social Backgrounds.

**Organizational:** Lack Scholarships & Financial Aid,

**Academic Social:** Retention-Specific Programs (Living Learning Communities, First-Year Experience, Advance Number of Retention Offices).

**Environmental Non-cognitive:** Lack of Social Integration and Campus Acclamation

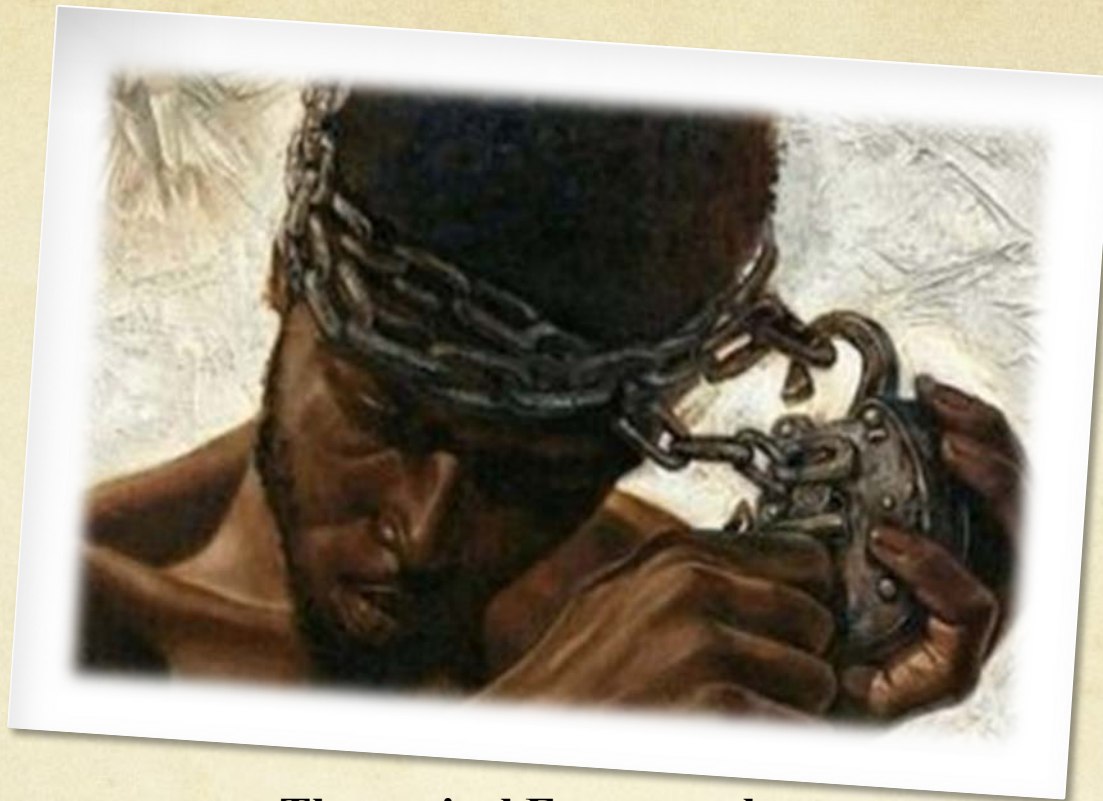
## *Family's Socioeconomic Status*

## *Specific Factors That Increase Retention Rates for African American Males*

**Academic Social:** Retention-Specific Programs (Living Learning Communities, First-Year Experience, Advance Number of Retention Offices).

**Academic Support Programs:** Course offerings, Faculty Interaction with Student, Intrusive Academic Advising, Tutoring Centers, Orientation Programs, Rules and Regulations.





## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Tinto's Model of Integration and Student Departure**

Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) stated, “A more explicit model of institutional impact, yet one similar to Astin’s in its dynamics, is a longitudinal model given by Tinto” (p. 51). Tinto’s theory focuses on the premise that students possess various social, family, and academic attributes, including beliefs and intentions related to college attendance and performance (Tinto, 1975).

# Methodology

Using a qualitative research design with phenomenology as the guiding principle, the research clearly explain specific attributes and factors that exist in the lives of the AAMs that participated in this study.

The qualitative research method allows for specific detail-based accounts from individual perspectives. Qualitative research methodology enables the researcher to examine participants in their natural environment.

**Phenomenology has been selected as methodology in order to examine factors that contribute to the academic success of first-generation African American males.**





# Non-Cognitive

Commonly, skills are divided into cognitive and non-cognitive. **According to Pierre et al. (2014), cognitive skills involve the “ability to understand complex ideas, to adapt effectively to the environment, to learn from experience, to engage in various forms of reasoning, to overcome obstacles by taking thought.”**

They include mental abilities that are used in thinking activities including reading, writing, and numeracy. (Green, 2010). **Non-cognitive skills are defined as the “patterns of thought, feelings and behaviors” (Borghans et al., 2008) that are socially determined and can be developed throughout the lifetime to produce value.**

**Non-cognitive skills comprise of personal traits, attitudes and motivations.**

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.

James A. Baldwin



# Instrumentation

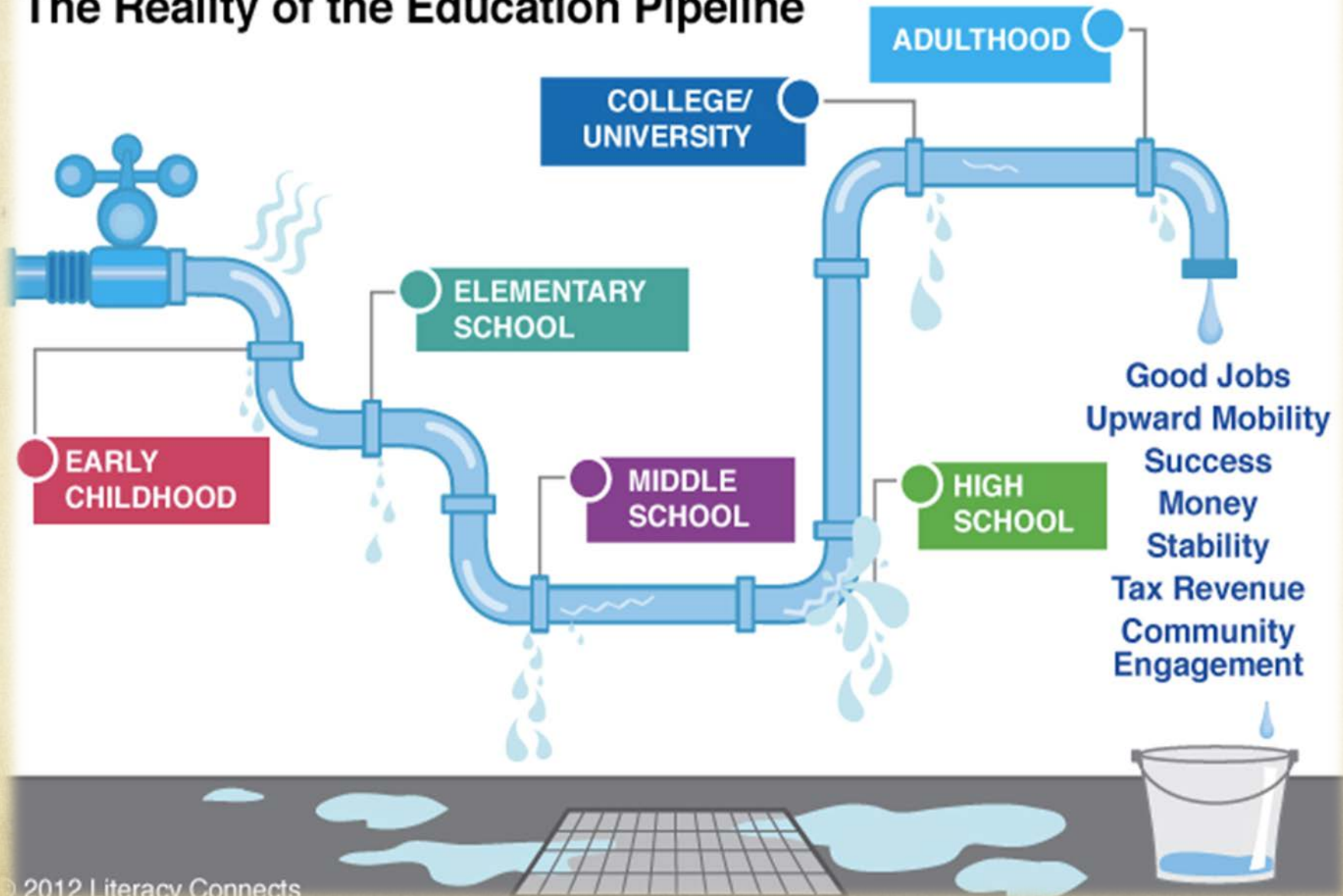
**These interviews will consist of face-to-face, in-depth, 60–120-minute interviews with each participant and a 30–60-minute in-person follow-up interview during a six-week timeframe.** The purpose of the follow-up interviews are to clearly understand the experiences of first-generation men of color; who are enrolled in a Historically Black College and Universities.

In addition, the follow-up portion of the interviews, participants will be asked to reconstruct the details of their K-12 educational experiences in which it occurred precollege. By having the participants revisit their K-12 experiences provides a more in-depth overview of their education journey. Conducting the interviews are necessary to understand and appreciate the unique journey of each individual experiencing the phenomenon (Crotty, 1998).



# Understanding The Pipeline

## The Reality of the Education Pipeline



# Primary Resources

Sedlacek, W. E. (1993). Employing noncognitive variables in the admission and retention of nontraditional students. Retrieved from <http://williamsedlacek.info/publications/articles/employing1.html>

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